

2022 GSRA Annual Meeting, Lake Blackshear Resort, October 3-4

## Early Voting Begins October 17th

By Dan Coffee

Election Day is **Tuesday, November 8<sup>th</sup>** for the November General Election. Advanced (Absentee In-Person) voting begins **October 17<sup>th</sup>** and ends **Friday, November 4<sup>th</sup>** for the **November 8<sup>th</sup> General Election**.

### Upcoming Elections Calendar of Events

- **October 11<sup>th</sup>** – Last day for a person to register and be eligible to vote in the November General Election and Runoff Election
- **October 17<sup>th</sup>** - Advanced (Absentee In-Person) Voting begins for the November General Election
- **October 22<sup>nd</sup>** – Mandatory Saturday Voting for the November General Election
- **October 28<sup>th</sup>** – Last day to submit absentee ballot application
- **October 29<sup>th</sup>** – Mandatory Saturday Voting
- **November 4<sup>th</sup>** – Early voting ends
- **November 8<sup>th</sup>** – Election Day (polls open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.)

There are three ways to cast a ballot:

- Early Voting – Advanced (Absentee In-Person)
- Absentee Voting by mail or drop box
- Election Day Voting at your polling place

### What's New

Legislation passed by the General Assembly last year changed some voting procedures. Among them:

- There are new ID requirements for requesting an absentee ballot.

- Every county will have at least one drop box for absentee ballots; they will be indoors under constant surveillance.
- Outer oath envelopes for absentee ballots must include the voter's driver's license or state ID number, or the last four digits of their Social Security number.
- Absentee ballots can't be requested until 78 days before an election, down from 180.

The Georgia Secretary of State website contains a My Voter Portal ([mvp.sos.ga.gov](http://mvp.sos.ga.gov)) to check your voter registration status, poll location, early voting locations in your county, registration information on file with the county office, and a sample ballot for the November General Election for your voting precinct.

Early voting hours vary by county. There are two mandatory Saturday dates and Sunday, October 30<sup>th</sup> is an optional voting date at each county's discretion. Voting times and dates vary among Georgia's 159 counties. Check with your county election office or check your My Voter Portal ([mvp.sos.ga.gov](http://mvp.sos.ga.gov)) to find the dates, hours, and early voting locations in your county.

To request an absentee ballot, you'll need:

- A completed Absentee Ballot Application which can be downloaded at the Georgia Secretary of State website found at <https://sos.ga.gov/>
- Your address, and
- Date of birth, and
- The county where you are registered to vote.

- And one of the following
  - The number for your driver's license or free state ID, or
  - The last four digits of your Social Security number, or
  - If you don't have a driver's license, state-issued ID, or your Social Security number on file with the voter registration system, you can upload a photo of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document that shows your name and address.

Visit the Georgia Voter Identification Requirements page at the Georgia Secretary of State's website for more information regarding acceptable forms of identification. Absentee ballots must be received by your county election office by 7 p.m. on Election Day (Tuesday, November 8<sup>th</sup>) to be counted, regardless of when mailed; postage is required.) For in-person delivery, make sure to arrive before the county election office closes. At least one drop box for ballots is available in every county. Drop boxes are accessible during early-voting hours until Friday, November

4<sup>th</sup>. Check times and locations with your county election office.

All 56 Senate and all 180 House seats as well as the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, various other state races, and one U.S. Senate seat are on the November General Election ballot. Stay informed about the issues and candidates' positions and **please VOTE!**



### GSRA Holds Membership Drive at GPHSA Annual Meeting

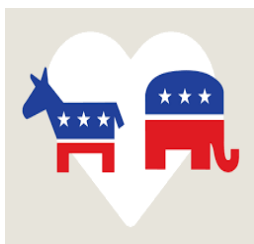


*Allan Hill and Bob Pollock pictured*

GSRA held a membership drive at the recent GPHSA Annual Meeting in Savannah. Local Chapter presidents, Allan Hill, Savannah Coastal, and Bob Pollock, Albany-SW Georgia, manned the GSRA booth. Through their efforts, 13 new members joined the association.

## Top of Mind: Political Bias

By Beverly Littlefield



“Bi-partisanship helps to avoid extremes and imbalances. It causes compromises and accommodations. So, let's cooperate.” — *Zbigniew Brzezinski*

As this newsletter goes to press, we will be gathering for our first in-person Annual Meeting in three years.

We've invited a number of elected officials, including the two gubernatorial candidates, incumbent Governor Brian Kemp, and challenger, Stacey Abrams. Neither is able to join us personally, but they've agreed to appear virtually, through video-recorded presentations.

A few readers have expressed the concern that GSRA has shown a particular political bias in recent articles about the candidates. We're very interested in anything going on in the political realm that potentially affects, for good or bad, our active and potential members. And since representing and advocating for our members' best interests entails a great deal of interaction with both the Executive and Legislative branches of our government, regardless of the party in power, we are, in fact, quite “political.”

Our job is to provide factual information equally to both sides of a bi-partisan initiative. We support any joint efforts that lead to laws and policies, including budgetary ones that protect and improve the lives of retirees and active employees.

This points to one term that I think most accurately describes who we are as an organization: “Non-partisan.” We remain objective and non-aligned, and work with anyone, of any political persuasion, who is willing to work with us on behalf of our constituents. That is not to say that, as individual members, we forego our political allegiances, but they do not come to the forefront when we are representing GSRA.

As an organization, above all we are independent and politically neutral. Our leadership consistently has demonstrated the capacity to work in that space, regardless of our personal political values.

When we have productive talks with leaders in both major political parties, we share the results of those conversations. If we have better access to some people more so than to others, we're going to let you know that too. You deserve to know.

And, I think it's fair to say that in one sense, we *are* biased: We stand for our members and others with similar interests, regardless of *their* political affiliations.

So, as Election Day 2022 draws near, be sure you, your family and friends are registered to vote, and VOTE for the candidates whom you believe have YOUR best interests as a state retiree or employee at heart.

And, as always, thank you for continuing to support GSRA.

## Local Chapter News

### Savannah Coastal

On August 30, the Savannah Coastal chapter hosted a joint meeting with the Retiree Auxiliary of the Georgia Professional Human Services Association (GPHSA). The meeting was held as part of the Annual Meeting of GPHSA at the Savannah Riverfront Marriott. The President of the Auxiliary is GSRA's very own Bob Pollock, and all of the auxiliary members, who came from around the state, are also members of GSRA. It was great to welcome them to Savannah.

Debbie Scarborough and Chris Love of AMBA were our featured speakers. They gave a very informative presentation of the benefits and discounts available to GSRA members. One of those benefits is Medical Emergency Services, which covers transportation costs such as ambulances and even Life Flight Air services.

We had 23 members present and it was a great meeting. Hopefully we'll do it again at next year's GPHSA conference.

### Macon-Middle Georgia

Macon-Middle Georgia chapter held a combination picnic/membership drive on Saturday, September 17 and it was a great success! Not only did they enjoy fellowship and good food, but they also attracted five new members, three regular renewals, one lifetime renewal, and promises from two people to go home and join online.



Some of the picnic participants are shown above

### Tri-County

GSRA's Tri-County chapter hosted a Legislative Candidate Forum for the Tri-County area members on September 27,

2022, with 29 in attendance. Legislators and legislative candidates participating were: Chris Benton, Candidate for Senate in Upson County; Ellen Wright, Candidate for Senate; Representative Debbie Buckner; Senator Randy Robertson.



John Mallory, Tri-County President, Chris Benton, candidate for Senate in Upson County, Ellen Write, candidate for Senate, Representative Debbie Buckner, Senator Randy Robertson, and Dan Coffee, Tri-County Legislative Liaison, are pictured above

## Get to Know Your GSRA Organization Members

From time to time we like to highlight different members of GSRA. We actually featured Joseph Drolet a couple of years ago, but wanted to bring you up to date on what Joseph has been up to, including some exciting news for him.



### Joseph Drolet GSRA Legislative Committee Member

Joseph Drolet, who was featured in this newsletter two years ago, has a new title: author.

Drolet, who became active on the Policy and Operations Committee five years ago, when he retired from the Attorney General's Office, has penned a book

about his experience prosecuting serial killer Wayne Williams (Atlanta's Missing and Murdered Children case). For information on his book, *The Pursuit of the Atlanta Child Killer*, check out his website: [www.josephdrolet.com](http://www.josephdrolet.com)

Drolet, 78, has been active in legislative and other activities of GSRA and continues to be impressed by the dedication and commitment of those involved in the organization. His goal, when he joined our efforts in



2017, was to help to revive COLAs for retired state employees, a goal that GSRA has at least partially achieved this year. Joseph also was instrumental in developing and securing the participation of the Employees' Retirement System in the Memorandum of Understanding that has allowed GSRA to better communicate with recent retirees.

Drolet lives in the historic Inman Park neighborhood of Atlanta, grew up in Kankakee,

Illinois, and received his Economics degree and his Law degree from the University of Illinois. Moving to Georgia in 1971, he spent twenty years with the Fulton County District Attorney's Office, seven years as Solicitor of the City Court of Atlanta and seven years in private law practice before becoming head of the Public Safety Section in the Attorney General's Office, a position he held for nearly twelve years.

## February/March New Members

| Name                  | County     | Name           | County       | Name            | County   |
|-----------------------|------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------|----------|
| <b>February</b>       |            | Philip King    | Gwinnett     | George Gilson   | Towns    |
| Lisa Ashburn          | Lanier     | Gerald Koon    | Bryan        | Vicki Hughes    | Bryan    |
| Lisa Boatwright       | Meriwether | Claire Newbern | DeKalb       | Tracy Lawson    | Clayton  |
| Jeffrey Boatwright    | Meriwether | Susan Perry    | Out of state | Beverly Martin  | Richmond |
| Jacqueline Brown      | Bibb       | Angela Reese   | Out of state | Willie Moore    | Baldwin  |
| Samuel Buckles        | Bartow     | Jack Roberts   | Dougherty    | William Pardue  | Cobb     |
| Nancy Cobb            | McIntosh   | Jean Robinson  | DeKalb       | Brenda Parker   | Cherokee |
| Jimmy Coleman         | Randolph   | Connie Salter  | Washington   | Angela Robinson | Clayton  |
| Debra Cornett         | Cherokee   | Roscoe Tramel  | Thomas       | Natalie Thomas  | Fulton   |
| Ray Crutchfield       | Upson      | Roger Walker   | Thomas       | Shirley Turner  | Richmond |
| Richard Duvall        | Polkr      | <b>March</b>   |              | James Welborn   | White    |
| Marian Echols         | DeKalb     | Donald Donovan | Paulding     |                 |          |
| Betty Felder          | Jefferson  | Beatrice Elam  | DeKalb       |                 |          |
| Ruth Fleming          | Fulton     | Diane Ennis    | Bryan        |                 |          |
| Christopher Hutcheson | Cobb       | Pandora Epps   | Henry        |                 |          |
| Lenora Jackson        | Wayne      | Edward Fuller  | DeKalb       |                 |          |

**Getting Help at GSRA is Easy**

Call 770-312-2799 or Email [Help@mygsra.com](mailto:Help@mygsra.com)

## As a Reminder

GSRA is a non-partisan organization. We work with politicians on both sides of the aisle. We have published in our recent newsletters information provided to us about our issues from both the Kemp and Abrams gubernatorial campaigns. We do not make endorsements of any candidates.

You are encouraged to support and vote for the candidates of your choice.



## Donate to GSRA Legal Fund

GSRA's Legal Fund was established as a dedicated legal fund in the event that leadership, on behalf of its members, ever has to retain legal counsel. The fund will be used to cover all appropriate legal fees related to ensuring that retiree benefits are not reduced or eliminated.

Every donation makes a difference. For more information and to donate to this fund click on the link below.

[GSRA Legal Fund](#)

